1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

considered to be their ancestorial relatives; that once upon a time the Yaruros were very many and now very few; that the Yaruros had been visited with great calamities the preceding year, and many of their people had died through sickness and other destructive forces.

Also, I learned that, though I could gather inklings of a rich spiritual culture and a good cross section of the material phases from this band, I had to go farther down river to meet the spiritual leaders of the remnants of this race if I wanted to reach the heart of the Yaruros' religion, cosmology, mythology, and ethics.

In all of the primitive groups with which I have come in contact, certain individuals are recognized as the leaders and authorities, especially on such matters as religion and social organization. The younger people hesitate and often refuse to discuss such matters altogether, but age alone is not enough to qualify an individual as the mouthpiece of the group. The Yaruros were no exception. As soon as they grasped that I wanted to know a great deal about their history and culture they urged me to talk to "Landaeta", their leader and great "musico" or shaman. He, with his family, was hunting on the lower Capanaparo. They offered to guide me to him. Accordingly, we journeyed downstream by moonlight to avoid the heat of the day, and as I subsequently discovered, to avoid meeting with crocodile hunters.

About noon the next day we sighted several empty canoes drawn up on the bank, and knew that there must be more Yaruros nearby. We landed on the sandy beach and awaited their return. They came early in the afternoon, the men carrying turtles and crocodiles slung on poles, the women with baskets filled with changuango, leaning forward as they walked, looking not unlike grotesque apes under their heavy loads; and also, little children carrying their share of food, straggling behind. Upon seeing me they were frightened, but did not run away.

My Yaruro paddlers acted the part of mediators perfectly, for soon afterwards we were all embarked and moving downstream to join the main body of Landaeta's band which, I was told, was encamped several miles downstream. Their good humor almost amounted to gaiety. The three canoes moved steadily down the river, the men paddling hard, and the women sitting quietly and casting shy inquisitive glances in my direction.

We found Landaeta and his people on a large exposed wind-swept beach. There was the white sand, the strong wind blowing from the east raising it into dust clouds, and the intense glare from river and sand; a few water jars, a few baskets, several refuse heaps with buzzards feeding at them, canoes drawn up on the beach, and some

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

524 323 532 a pole. In general, therefore, organized play for child or adult is hardly present.

WAR

726 173 175 The Yaruros did not speak much of war. None of their legends make any reference to it except in one case which says that they were killed by the "Racionales" and that they retaliated.* The known historical sources say nothing except Father Gumilla's account, which makes reference to the pacification of the "Saruri."

MORAL ATTITUDES

183 577 On the subject of conduct, the outlook on life and the organization of life values, we must distinguish between theory and practice. The former grows out of reflection and represents the intellectualization of the universe as seen without much reference to practical life. The second springs from the social and economic relationships and the fusing of individual ends and purposes into the purposes and ends of the group, whereas the first is not strictly controlled by custom and practical needs. Both exist among the [791] Yaruros. For the first we have to turn to the shaman, who in addition to being a religious leader, a savant, is also a moralist; and for the second we turn to the entire social group and need to watch it in its behavior.

175 171 114 In reading over the early account of the aborigines of the region, among which we must presumably include Yaruros, we gather that their moral concepts were different from those of the Christians, but perhaps neither better nor worse in practice. It must be doubted, however, whether a number of practices attributed to the Yaruros are authentic. We read, for instance, that a number of the aborigines were patricides, and we are given a picture of the male children, on reaching adolescence, rising against the fathers [682] through lust for the mother. Patricide is an abhorrent crime and [683] the motive behind it is equally abhorrent. It is to be doubted whether patricide, or even lesser acts, such as beating the father, were ever practiced, except in sporadic cases such as may occur in [684] any society. It hardly seems possible that women were the cause of it when it is known, as it is known today, that mating and extramarital relationships are very strictly controlled by tradition and social training. Disregarding, therefore, such allusions to the moral life of the primitive peoples of the Orinoco, let us turn to our informants for an understanding of their present mode of life. The

* It would appear probable that the nomadic Yaruros were too weak to ever develop any warlike spirit.

/9 cont./
of the Yaruro (7), or even remains of objects of the Yaruro of

7. See "infra" IV List...2.

former times, whose descendants have forgotten the techniques of making them?

c) History

We hardly know much more about their post-Colombian history. Some Jesuit missionaries, as we mentioned above, had contacts with them on the bank of the Orinoco toward the middle of the eighteenth century (7).

7. See "infra" IV List...2.

Did they leave some sort of imprint on their culture? This we do not know. In any case the Yaruro do not seem to have preserved any memory of it, if it isn't the fear of bearded men on the part of the children. They do remember /10/ on the other hand for a more recent period some battles which put in opposition in the course of a civil war on the Capanaparo even the Venezuelans against each other.

The important event of the last years (1920-1940) remains for them the installation of Racionales (9) on the Capanaparo,

9. Venezuelans

an installation the repercussions of which, as much on their way of life and the social, economic, and religious structure of their society as on their sanitary conditions and their demographic situation (illnesses and, at a certain period, repression), have been and continue to be considerable.

Y /12 cont./
773 having been disobediant he was going to serve as food for the
825 pumę's and be transformed into chigüíre. In the same instant
he was transformed into chigüíre."

2nd version (literal translation)

"The Kuma had a little receptacle filled with plaga and all kinds of zancudos (22). A pumę, the chigüíre, the

Y
[136] 22. Anopheles mosquitoes (Cellia argyritarsis), in Venezuelan.

Otomaco asked Kuma what kind of animal was in the receptacle. She answered that they were dangerous zancudos and that he must not open it because that would present danger. The Otomaco said: "I am going to open it." Then he opened the receptacle and thus the plaga came. If he had not opened it there would have been no plaga. When he had opened the receptacle, the mosquitoes began to bite him. The Otomaco threw himself into the water because he could not stand the bites and was transformed into chigüíre because he had disobeyed. Iɨiai said to him: "You did not want to obey, you will be transformed into chigüíre which the pumę's will kill to feed upon." The bristles of the chigüíres are the zancudos. The present chigüíres are the sons of those who have disobeyed."

O
101 Otomaco territory seems to have been situated north of
131 that of the Yaruro, around the place where they supposedly were created: Los Caballos, near the Río Cunaviche. "All these dunes," Pedro Ramón Camacho said to us word for word, and at the same time his hand made a one-quarter turn of the horizon toward the north, "were once covered with Otomaco
O villages. The remains of pimpina (23), of plates, of
172
415
Y
173 23. A pitcher of porous earthenware used as a water-cooler in Venezuelan.

/12 cont./

budare (24), of tinaja (25), etc...which are found there are

24. Dish to cook flat manioc cakes, in Venezuelan.

25. Jar, in Venezuelan.

from the Otomaco women. But they often came this way--sometimes to dance or to buy canoes--to meet with the ancestors of the Yaruro of today. Like the former they were themselves good people. Yaruro and Otomaco each spoke in their dialect, which they mutually understood, which was not difficult. "Today," he added, "not a person remembers it."

Their relations must even have extended further, since they married among themselves without any obstacle /13/ placing itself in the way. Ijiai in fact approved of these unions, as opposed to those with other Indians, the Piquero and Taparito included, Pedro Ramón Camacho specified, or with the Racionales, of which he disapproved.

They fed themselves, it appears, not only on fish, tortoise, deer, and vegetable produce grown in the conucos, but also on guiriguiri duck (26), a bird little in demand among the

26. Venezuelan name of the Dendrocygna automnalis.

present Indians because of the fishy taste of its meat. In addition, like the Yaruro, they appear to have lived in round huts built on the dunes, practiced a ball game, and made their pottery with the same technique and not with the aid of basketwork molds, contrary to what the remains with basketwork impressions which abound in the region where they apparently lived would lead us to suppose.